

# Country Policy Communique

## News from Central Asia and the Eastern Neighbourhood

September 2020



*COMPASS Country Policy Communique is a platform where the project provides regular updates about policy developments in the region. The content of this policy communique is taken from respective government news and other official channels and reports.*

# Connectivity and foreign policy

## *Uzbekistan*

### **Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan regarding Azerbaijan-Armenian conflict escalation**

28.09.20

Source: [Official site of MFA Uzbekistan](#)

The escalation of tension between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia is of extreme concern in the Republic of Uzbekistan. The use of military force in the course of a confrontation can lead to numerous human casualties on both sides. The Uzbek side, as the chair of the Commonwealth of Independent States, reaffirms the importance of strengthening relations of friendship, good-neighborliness and mutual trust, and the peaceful resolution of disputes strictly in accordance with international law within CIS framework. We call on the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia to cease hostilities as soon as possible and to start diplomatic negotiations for a peaceful settlement of the conflict, while respecting the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

### **About Uzbek-Tajik political consultations**

29.09.20

Source: [Official site of MFA Uzbekistan](#)

On September 29, 2020, in Dushanbe, the foreign Ministers of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, Abdulaziz Kamilov and Sirojiddin muhriddin, held political consultations on the state and prospects of bilateral cooperation. During the political consultations, issues of further enhancing cooperation in the political, trade and economic, investment, water and energy, transport and communication, and cultural spheres, as well as interaction within international organizations such as the UN, OSCE, SCO, CIS, OIC, and IFAS were discussed. It was noted that thanks to the firm political will and support of the Heads of state, Uzbek-Tajik relations have risen to a qualitatively new level in recent years and have acquired a steadily growing character. There is an unprecedented growth in trade between the two countries, which in 2019 amounted to 500 million us dollars. It was emphasized that, despite the restrictive measures related to the coronavirus pandemic, in January-July of this year, the trade turnover increased by 7.5% (\$255.4 million). The Ministers noted that the mutual support provided in the context of the pandemic testifies to the relations of friendship and close cooperation between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. During the consultations, the sides also exchanged views on the preparations for the Third consultative Meeting of the heads of Central Asian States, which is scheduled to be held in Kyrgyzstan.

### **Meeting with the deputy speaker of the house of representatives of the parliament of Malaysia**

29.09.20

Source: [Official site of MFA Uzbekistan](#)

On September 30, 2020, Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan Ravshan Usmanov met with the Deputy speaker of the house of representatives (Dewan Rakyat) Parliament of Malaysia by Mohammed Rashid bin Hasnon. During the meeting, the Malaysian side was informed in detail about the initiatives of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, announced during the 75th session of the UN General Assembly. The Malaysian side highly appreciates the large-scale reforms implemented in Uzbekistan aimed at further liberalizing and modernizing the economy, improving public administration and the judicial and legal sphere. The parties also discussed the current state and priority areas for further development of Uzbek-Malaysian cooperation. The Deputy speaker agreed with the opinion that it is necessary to continue contacts between the Deputy corps of the two countries, including through the exchange of best practices in the field of lawmaking and visits of parliamentary delegations in order to fill the bilateral relations with new areas of cooperation. The importance of establishing practical interaction between the newly created inter-parliamentary friendship groups in the legislative bodies of Uzbekistan and Malaysia this year was noted. They confirmed their mutual interest in further expanding cooperation and mutual support for initiatives within international organizations, in particular the UN, the OIC and other international structures. Following the talks, the parties agreed to continue political and diplomatic contacts to further expand the agenda of Uzbek-Malaysian cooperation.

### **Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan Abdulla Aripov arrives in Dushanbe**

29.09.20

Source: [Government Portal of the Republic of Uzbekistan](#)

Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan Abdulla Aripov has arrived in the capital city of Tajikistan to attend the Seventh Session of the Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation. Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan Davlatsho Gulmuhammadzoda has met the Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan at Dushanbe International Airport.

As previously reported, the agenda of the commission includes discussion of the current issues of enhancing cooperation in trade-economic, transport and communication, energy, agriculture and water management, as well as in cultural-humanitarian sphere. A Business Forum and Business Council Meeting are also planned to be held during the visit.

### **Uzbekistan will host Summit of Head of CIS States on 16<sup>th</sup> of October 2020**

11.09.20

Source: [Official site of MFA Uzbekistan](#)

On September 11, 2020, Minister of foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan Abdulaziz Kamilov held a meeting with the Chairman of the CIS Executive Committee – CIS Executive Secretary Sergey Lebedev in Moscow. During the meeting, parties discussed implementation of action plan for Uzbekistan's chairmanship in the CIS in 2020. It was noted that despite the coronavirus pandemic, the Uzbek side managed to successfully implement most of the previously planned activities. This year's meetings of the CIS statutory bodies were held in the format of video conferences: The Council of foreign Ministers (May 12), the Council of heads of government (May 29) and the CIS economic Council (June 30), as well as a number of meetings of sectoral cooperation bodies. Special attention is paid to the thorough preparation of the main event of Uzbekistan's chairmanship in CIS – the summit of heads of state (October 16). Parties discussed the agenda of this event which includes important issues aimed at further improving the effectiveness of the CIS activities.

### **The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan received Deputy Prime Minister of Russian Federation**

25.09.20

Source: [Official site of MFA Uzbekistan](#)

On September 15, 2020, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev received Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Alexey Overchuk. During the meeting, topical issues of further development of long-term cooperation in the light of the implementation of agreements at the highest level were discussed. Special attention was paid to the preparation of a long-term program of economic cooperation, promotion of joint investment projects, and activation of practical work between the regions of the two countries. The importance of accelerating priority programs and projects of interaction in order to fill the agenda of the Uzbek-Russian relations of strategic partnership with new content was noted. They also exchanged views on cooperation between our country and the Eurasian economic Union and continued close contacts in the CIS.

## **Speech by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan H.E. Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev at the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly**

23.09.20

Source: [The Government Portal of the Republic of Uzbekistan](#)

“The seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly is being held for the first time in the history of the United Nations in a completely new format – an online videoconferencing due to the coronavirus pandemic. In this context, all of us have deeply realized the need to consolidating the mutual efforts of governments, parliaments, civil society institutions; strengthening the principles of common responsibility; coordinating international partnership accordingly; increasing the status and capacity, as well as expanding the competences of the World Health Organization”.

Republic of Uzbekistan proposes to develop under the UN auspices an International Code of Voluntary Commitments of States during pandemics;

to adopt a special resolution of the United Nations General Assembly on enhancing the role of parliaments in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and ensuring human rights;

- to establish a Regional Centre for the Development of Transport and Communications under the auspices of the United Nations;
- to hold an International conference on the ten-year results and forthcoming prospects of this Joint Plan of the Regional Strategy;
- to establish a permanent UN commission on Afghanistan that would address the concerns of long-suffering Afghan people;
- to adopt a special resolution of the UN General Assembly declaring the Aral Sea region an area of ecological innovation and technologies;
- to set the issues of poverty eradication and the fight against poverty as one of the main topics of the next session of the United Nations General Assembly and hold a Global Summit on these issues.

## **A delegation of Uzbekistan takes part in a special meeting of the ministers of foreign affairs of the CICA member states**

24.09.20

Source: [Official site of MFA Uzbekistan](#)

On 24 September 2020, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan Abdulaziz Kamilov took part in a special meeting of the heads of foreign affairs of the states participating in the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) in the format of a video conference.

The foreign ministers of the countries participating in the CICA discussed issues related to the further intensification of interaction and strengthening of confidence-building measures in the context of the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

They also exchanged views on topical international and regional issues.

The ministers approved the transfer to the Republic of Kazakhstan of the chairmanship of the Meeting for the period 2020-2022, and also approved the candidacy of this country Kairat Sarybai for the position of Executive Director of the CICA Secretariat.

### **Online forum of entrepreneurs Baku-2020**

25.09.20

Source: [Official city of the Ministry of Economy of Azerbaijan](#)

With the support of the Small and Medium Business Development Agency (SMBDA) under the Ministry of Economy the “First International Online Entrepreneurs Forum - Baku 2020” was launched on 22 September, organized by the "SA Consulting" LLC and in partnership with the youth public association "Odlar Yurdu", "SAT Group", Youth Center for Social Business, Business Club "Networking.az", "Majlis Business Network" and the "Eurasian Economic Cooperation Organization". The main purpose of the online event is to motivate entrepreneurs in pandemic and post-pandemic times, to study international experience in this field and to discuss the challenges faced by entrepreneurs. During the event, Adviser to the Chairman of the Board of KOBIA Zaur Gardashov, Deputy Executive Director of the Azerbaijan Youth Fund Gadir Khalilov, Member of Milli Mejlis Erkin Gadirli, as well as the head of "SA Consulting" Afgan Safarli and others spoke about the purpose of the forum. They expressed their views on the development of entrepreneurship, on the support provided to entrepreneurs and the involvement of young people in entrepreneurial activities.

### **TAP pipeline to start pumping gas into Italy by end of year**

Source: [Azeri-Press Agency](#)

“At the end of the year the gas will flow, and we can finally open the southern corridor,” Luca Schieppati said at the Italian Energy Summit 2020. He also added that he doesn't see the immediate risk for the gas transportation related to the current volatility at the Armenia-Azerbaijan front line.

### **Azerbaijani President: Development of democracy and human rights protection are among top priorities of our government**

21.09.20

Source: [Azerbaijan State News Agency](#)

While addressing the high-level meeting in a video format to mark the 75th anniversary of the United Nations held on the sidelines of the 75th session of the UN General Assembly the president Aliyev had highlighted that human rights and democracy including freedoms of assembly, expression, religion and civil society development are developmental priority for Azerbaijan.

### **PACE rapporteurs welcome decision to release Tofiq Yagublu to house arrest**

22.09.20

Source: [Trend News Agency](#)

Rapporteurs from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) have welcomed the decision of the Baku Appeals Court to release jailed Azerbaijani opposition politician Tofiq Yagublu into house arrest while he awaits a September 28, 2020 hearing in his case, Trend reports with reference to PACE.

According to this report “The conversion of his detention into house arrest is a welcome first step,” said PACE’s monitoring co-rapporteurs for Azerbaijan, Roger Gale (United Kingdom, EC/DA) and Stefan Schennach (Austria, SOC), together with the Assembly’s co-rapporteur on reported cases of political prisoners in Azerbaijan, Sunna Ævarsdóttir (Iceland, SOC)".

## **FM Lavrov affirms Russia`s intention to deepen relations with Azerbaijan**

24.09.20

Source: [Azerbaijan State News Agency](#)

On September 24<sup>th</sup> the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation Sergei Lavrov have met the Azerbaijani delegation led by Speaker of the Parliament Sahiba Gafarova in Moscow.

“Russia intends to deepen relations with Azerbaijan in all areas of life, including at the diplomatic level,” said Lavrov. Russian FM expressed his confidence that the visit would make a valuable contribution to the development of Russian-Azerbaijani relations.

## *Belarus*

### **Belarus is working on a constitutional reform**

02.09.20

Source: [Belarusian Telegraph Agency](#)

Belarus is working on a constitutional reform, Belarus' Minister of Foreign Affairs Vladimir Makei said as he met with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov in Moscow on 2 September. According to him “this process is underway. As far as I know, at least two preliminary versions have already been submitted to the head of state. A working group has been set up. The work on amendments to the current Constitution is in full swing. Public hearings of the amendments will be held with all categories of the population.”

### **Belarus president made new appointments of top officials**

03.09.20

Source: [Belarusian Telegraph Agency](#)

Major appointments include:

Valery Vakulchik (ex-head of KGB) – State Secretary of the Security Council;  
Ivan Tertel (ex-head of KGK – State Control Committee) – Chairman of the State Security Committee (KGB);  
Anatoly Sivak (former Chairman of the Minsk City Executive Committee) – Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus;  
Vladimir Kukharev (former Deputy Prime Minister) – Chairman of the Minsk City Executive Committee

### **Andrei Shved appointed Belarus' prosecutor general**

09.09.20

Source: Pravo.by - [The National Legal Internet Portal of the Republic of Belarus](#)

President Aleksandr Lukashenko appointed as Prosecutor General gen. Andrei Shved, who previously headed the Belarusian State Forensic Examination Committee. The president mentioned that Andrei Shved might be the most qualified person for this post, because he worked in various positions in law enforcement agencies and in the public prosecutors' offices. Dismissed Aleksandr Konyuk was described by A. Lukashenko as a reliable man, a proper statesman, a military man. Given his knowledge of foreign languages he is likely to join diplomatic service in near future.

### **The sci-tech council has been set up under Chairman of the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) Mikhail Myasnikov**

10.09.20

Source: [Belarusian Telegraph Agency](#)

Aleksandr Shumilin, Chairman of the State Committee on Science and Technology of Belarus, took part in the first video conference of the council. Five issues were on the agenda, including prospects for the development of the Eurasian economic integration and cooperation in science and technology, operation of expert groups, preparation and implementation of interstate programs and innovation projects of the Eurasian Economic Union.

### **Lukashenko held negotiations with Putin in Sochi. Russia intends to lend Belarus \$1.5bn and to provide a new vaccine**

14.09.20

Source: [Belarusian Telegraph Agency](#)

Russia intends to give Belarus a \$1.5 billion loan, Russian President Vladimir Putin noted that the loan will be granted in the near future.

The leaders also agreed to deliver the first batch of the Russian coronavirus vaccine Sputnik V to Belarus, Press Secretary of the President of Russia Dmitry Peskov told the media after the talks between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko on 14 September.

### **Lukashenko announces launch date for Belarus Nuclear power plant**

16.09.20

Source: [TUT.BY](#)

"Our first nuclear power plant is being prepared for launch. I invite everyone, I think, on November 7, a significant day for us, we will be able to visit there and realize that we got the first electricity from our station", Lukashenko said.

The Belarusian nuclear power plant with two reactors with a total capacity of 2400 MW is being built using a Russian project near the Ostrovets of Grodno region. A loan of up to \$10 billion was issued for construction by Russia.

### **Aleksandr Lukashenko appointed new rectors of several state HEIs**

21.09.20

Source: [Belarusian Telegraph Agency](#)

A. Lukashenko has appointed rector of the Academy of Public Administration under the aegis of the President of the Republic of Belarus. He also has approved the rectors of three medical universities (in Minsk, Gomel and Grodno).

### **Lukashenko sworn in as Belarus president**

23.09.20

Source: [Belarusian Telegraph Agency](#)

Aleksandr Lukashenko has been sworn-in as the President of Belarus in an inaugural ceremony in the Palace of Independence. The presidential election in Belarus took place on 9 August. According to the Central Election Committee of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko got 80.1% with the total turnout of 84.28%. Later the ceremony was blamed for being "secret", as the date of inauguration has not been announced in advance. Critics received attention of A.Lukashenko.

## *Tajikistan*

### **Signing of the Exchange Notes on mutual understanding between the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Government of Japan**

02.10.20

Source: [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan](#)

On October 2, 2020, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan Mr. Sirojiddin Muhridin received the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Republic of Tajikistan Mr. Takayuki Miyashita. The parties discussed the development of bilateral relations between Tajikistan and Japan in various fields and also exchanged views on other issues of mutual interest. They also discussed cooperation between the two countries in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan expressed his gratitude for the assistance of Japan in the field of infrastructure, health, sanitation, public welfare, training and skills development within the framework of the Office Development Assistance (ODA).

### **Meeting of the Minister of Foreign Affairs with the chiefs of the Representative of JICA Tajikistan Office**

28.09.2020

Source: [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan](#)

On September 28, 2020, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan Sirojiddin Muhridin received the former Chief Representative of the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in the Republic of Tajikistan Mr. Hideki Tanabe and its new Chief Mr. Takasaku Muneo.

During the meeting, the sides touched upon the issues of bilateral relations between Tajikistan and Japan within the framework of the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and discussed the implementation of current joint projects on technical assistance in the field of economy, education, health care and social sphere of the country. Cooperation between the two countries in the fight against Covid-19 was also noted.

### **Meeting with the General Director of “as-Salam” Charitable Organization**

28.09.2020

Source: [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan](#)

On September 28, 2020, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan Sirojiddin Muhridin, received the General Director of the Charitable Organization "al-Salam" of the State of Kuwait Dr. Nabil Hamad Al-Aoun. During the meeting, the Minister of Foreign Affairs conveyed the gratitude of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan to the Director General of the “as-Salam” charitable organization and the Government of the State of Kuwait for the transfer of fourteen ambulances to our country to combat Covid-19.

### **Participation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan at the Special Meeting of Foreign Ministers of CICA member states**

24.09.2020

Source: [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan](#)

On 24 September 2020 the Special Virtual Meeting of Foreign Ministers of the member states of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) was held, in which Mr. Sirojiddin Muhridin, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan took part as the Chair of the Conference.

In his statement, the Minister presented detailed information on the 2 year activity of Tajikistan as a Chairman of CICA and talked about achievements and priorities of the country in the CICA. As the Tajikistan's Chairmanship in the CICA came to an end, the Minister expressed gratitude to all CICA member states for their support and active participation in the events over the past two years. He also stressed that Tajikistan intends to continue multifaceted interaction with member states of the CICA to pursue the goals and objectives of the CICA.

### **Participation in the Annual Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)**

23.09.2020

Source: [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan](#)

On September 23, 2020, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan Sirojiddin Muhridin attended the Annual Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs). In his statement, the Minister of Foreign Affairs called the promotion of issues related to transit and transport, international trade, information and communication technologies, regional integration, trade facilitation and climate change, during the COVID-19 era, as the priorities. In addition, Sirojiddin Muhridin named the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028" as an important platform for advancing water related issues within the LLDCs area.

### **Gala event dedicated to the 28th anniversary of independence of Tajikistan and launching of the second hydro unit of the Roghun Hydroelectric Power Plant**

09.09.2019

Source: [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan](#)

On September 9, the Founder of Peace and National Unity, Leader of the Nation, President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon and Dushanbe Chairman Rustami Emomali took part in a gala event dedicated to the 28th anniversary of independence of Tajikistan and launching of the second hydro unit of the Roghun Hydroelectric Power Plant (HPP). The ceremony took place in the Navruzgoh complex. President Emomali Rahmon congratulated the people of Tajikistan, compatriots living abroad, and the participants on the occasion of the 28th anniversary of independence and the launch of the second hydro unit of the Rogun HPP, – a bright light of the houses of the inhabitants of Tajikistan and the guarantor of the bright future of our beloved motherland.

The head of state Emomali Rahmon emphasized that for the past 28 years, the ancient and civilized Tajik people have attained a sacred and historical achievement – state independence, and today this great phenomenon in the modern history of our people is celebrated with a high sense of patriotism and pride.